

rived. Soon after a hurricane of clangor burst forth from the bells of the capital. Every church having five domes at the least, and a corresponding number of bells, the air seemed to vibrate far and near with heavy, harmonious sounds. To this accompaniment I went to the Winter Palace. There was great bustle and animation in the streets, yet the hundreds of carriages and cabs hurrying along with Russian speed failed to crowd the immense squares and thoroughfares of that Imperial neighborhood. The state-rooms through which I passed were nearly all covered with white stucco, and decorated with bronze ornaments of chaste and simple style. In many the Corinthian column and rectangular window prevail; others exhibit the less classic features of the Renaissance and abound in twisted pillars laden with gilded foliage and curious arabesques; but the general character of the whole is grandeur rather than pomp, and though no attempt is made to aspire to anything exquisitely artistic, the eye everywhere meets fine and symmetrical combinations of form, size and color. There were two throne-halls, the larger of which differed but little in general aspect from other rooms of the same size and height. The smaller, draped with red velvet, and with the throne placed in the niche in front of a glorious picture of Peter the Great, is, perhaps, the most tasteful apartment of all I have seen. But even this seeks to impress rather by a proud plainness of style than by gorgeousness or glitter. The grand unaffected simplicity with which the whole city is built is deliberately repeated in the adornment of the Imperial Palace.

In a long narrow passage, which deserves to be specially mentioned, many hundreds of portraits are panelled on the walls. They represent the Generals who fought against Napoleon I., and, with the Emperor Alexander, his victorious enemy, occupying a whole side of the gallery for himself, are an interesting illustration of a great and decisive time. Another hall devoted to the memory of the various field-marsals who distinguished themselves in the same war, contains the portraits of some Russian Generals, with the "Iron Duke," and old Blucher associated with them. There were also pictures of battles, showing within their enormous frames whole fields of contest. The gay and brilliant crowd was now fast assembling. The room positively sparkled with the shine of tunics, catans, and dress-coats of every cut and form. The variety of official vestment was astonishing. Officers in English military coats alternated with others wearing Polish, Cossack and Circassian dress. The sons of the Don, in scarlet blouses, appeared in friendly proximity to the descendants of the gallant men who, in the hills of the Caucasus, have so long withstood the whole might and main of the Czar. Some of these foreign mountaineers were clad in Carmoisin velvet, trimmed with sable fur and set off by red and golden facings. On the breasts as well as the backs of their blouses they had rows of folds sewed on to hold cartridges, the rest of their armament being equally distributed over both sides of their body. Two pistols behind and another in front seemed to be a favorite mode of equipment. In that corner a bevy of generals, with refulgent epaulettes, were conversing on the events of the day; here ministers, without any epaulettes at all, but with an intricate arrangement of boughs, leaves and fruit on their dresses, were courteously doing the honors of the place to foreign guests. Councillors of state, judges and members of the senate, the synod, the academy of science, and many other scientific and administrative boards were present. This superb assemblage consisted of the men that govern Russia.

As the crowd began to thicken, the first ladies made their appearance. Nearly all of them were clad in white silks, with trains exhibiting every hue and shade; strips of colored velvet trimming the bodices, and in many cases the skirt also, constituted the peculiar element of the "Russian dress." Another feature of the national costume prescribed for the occasion, was the kakosh hik or diadem worn by all the ladies, excepting the bride. It is a semicircular band covered with velvet and studded with pearls and jewellery so graceful and becoming that it reflects no little credit on the taste of the peasant girls, the original devisers of this ornament. The ladies had magnificent robes, but the grand display of jewellery was reserved for the ball in the evening.

Leaving the Field-Marshal's hall before the arrival of the Imperial procession, I threaded my way to the Chapel Royal. Detachments of various troops of the guard were drawn up here and there, and every door watched by the cuirassiers of the body guard. Gigantic men in scarlet uniform, with buckskins, top-boots, and steel helmets, crowned with the two-headed eagle, stood like so many mute statues in the places assigned to their care. They are the Russian Horse Guards, and though an eye accustomed to the sight of the two silent horsemen holding watch and ward in White-hall, may be excused for preferring the familiar to the foreign, it must be admitted that the latter too are no bad specimens of strength and elegance combined.

The Chapel Royal, in which the ceremony was to be performed, already swarmed with the cream of the aristocratic company invited.

It is a hall of moderate dimensions, in the French style of the last century. White walls, copiously studded with bronze garlands, festoons, and diminutive angels, impart to it a courtly rather than a religious air. To this part of the church, destined for the congregation, there is joined a dome containing the altar. In the first dome the clergy were already in attendance. At their head was pointed out to me the Archbishop Metropolit of Novgorod and St. Petersburg, than whom there is only one greater ecclesiastic, the Archbishop of Moscow, in the empire. With him were four other bishops, old men, all wearing the silver tiaras, and ample mantles of their rank. Archpriests, with uncovered heads and long flowing hair, reaching to the shoulder, stood beside them in violet cloaks; other priests were seen stationed in the background. In a niche on the right stood the Court singers—boys and men of all ages. Close to them, in the front part of the chapel, I saw Prince Menschikoff leaning against the rail. A friendly old gentleman, with bright eyes and relaxed features, he certainly did not look like one who but twelve years ago caused a sanguinary war. Sir Andrew Buchanan, in British diplomatic uniform, with the order of the Thistle round his neck, was talking with his fellow ambassadors. A Greek general, in loose jacket and Oriental gaiters, was noticeable by contrast, and French Marquises, German Grafs, and Italian Contes vied with Russian Princes in the profusion of Orders and the elegance of garb.

Suddenly the hum is hushed. A master of ceremonies, *baton* in hand, has entered to announce the appearance of the marriage procession. While the same message is being given to the town by the guns outside, the *equerries* and *fouriers de la cour* enter the chapel. The masters of ceremonies, the chamberlains, and the various *charges* of the Court follow in due succession. And now the Emperor and Empress come in sight, preceded by Count Schuvaloff, the Grand Marschal. His Majesty is in the uniform of a General, and leads his Royal spouse to the Metropolit, standing in the centre of the church to receive them. As the aged dignitary slowly and gently waves his cross to and fro, the Emperor stoops to kiss the sign of Salvation, and to cross himself on forehead and chest with holy water. The Empress repeats the sacred rite, and places herself beside her august husband. The Crown Prince Czarewitch is the next to enter, to kiss, bow and cross himself in accordance with the devout forms of the Church. After him walk in princess Dagmar, or, as she has been lately called, the Orthodox Grand Duchess Maria Fedorowna of all the Russians. She walks in beauty. The Metropolit, who looks as though he had stepped out of the frame of some ancient picture of the church, inclines himself to the blooming girl as she conforms to the requirements of the national creed. Her Imperial Highness steps back to the three principal members of her family, who have already entered the sacred edifice. The four stand together, and the eyes of all present centre upon them. In them is compassed the present and future of this immense empire. The Czar, tall, majestic, with the habit of command and the disposition to kindness clearly legible on his manly features, is not only the first, but also the finest man in the room. His Queen, whom sickness has not robbed of the feminine grace which clothed her younger years, is readily recognizable from the well known portraits representing the beautiful Mary of Hesse. In a white dress, with a train of gold stuff, trimmed with ermine, and a sparkling diadem on her head, her Majesty looks worthy to be a queen. The Grand Duke, successor to the throne, is rather stout for his age, with a good share of will and resolution stamped upon his youthful face. Like a rose growing in the shadow of an oak, Princess Dagmar stood beside him. Her lovely features were animated by the excitement, and in her eye shone confident the hope of future happiness. On her dark locks rested a crown of priceless diamonds, graceful and light as a wreath or a chaplet of flowers. A superb brooch, if a jewel covering nearly the whole upper part of the bodice can be called so, glistened on her breast. Her robe was of white moire-antique, and her train, carried by four chamberlains, of crimson velvet, trimmed with ermine.

Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Crown Prince of Prussia, and the Prince of Denmark entered next. Then came the younger son of the Emperor, Princess Vladimir, Alexis, Serge and Paul, the Grand Duke Constantine, and his consort with their children, and after them the other Princes and Princesses of the blood, close the royal party of the procession. All went through the same ceremony of kissing the cross offered them by the Metropolit, and all in turn were kissed, so it seemed to me by the Metropolit. He bowed lovingly down to the little children, as they went up to him, one after the other, and when the last of them had made obeisance before the cross, returned with his clergy to the altar. The Imperial family and their royal guests then likewise preceded to the centre of the church, the remaining members of the procession, as they came in, disposing themselves in the entrance-hall. There were but few ladies in the train.

And now the service began. The clergy having ranged themselves